

ing piece of good fortune was an *A. adippe* ab. *ultra-charlotta*. The sun had gone in and 8-10 *adippe* parked themselves on bracken with wings outspread. One appeared to have confluent markings. All took wing as I approached except my quarry which hesitated. When barely within range it rose, but with a long stretch of arm it was netted.

What a wonderful pastime we have, even though agriculture, afforestation, pesticides and cattle have divested large tracts of our enjoyment. I cannot complain, but rather be thankful for a rewarding hobby which renewed one's strength in times of stress and increased one's appreciation of the glory of nature.

## Isle of Canna Report, 1972-1974

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Except for a very fine April in 1974, and a short spell after midsummer, these three years have produced little really fine weather in the Hebrides, and we still look back to 1968 as the last really good summer we have had. On 30th June 1972, for example, I wrote in my dairy "End of coldest, wettest, stormiest June remembered", and on 18th July the same year "Saw first Meadow Brown. But the scarcity of butterflies in the most favourable places, rather their entire absence, is depressing. Occasional *brassicae* or *napi* in gardens is all".

1972 is distinguished as the only year in my Hebridean experience, which goes back to 1933, in which absolutely no migrants of any kind were observed at all. However, I am glad to say that after the very fine April of 1974, the butterflies revived in numbers very considerably.

*Migrants*. On 7/1/73 the moth trap produced a very fine specimen of *M. (L.) unipuncta* Haw., already reported in the *Record*, Vol. 85, p. 107. The moth may have bred here, as a fresh specimen was taken in the trap on 20th September and three more on the 22nd. One of these is now in the Royal Scottish Museum.

A dark specimen of *E. occulta* L. was taken in the trap on 25/7/73. *V. atalanta* L. first appeared on 26th June and was seen singly on six occasions, including a pupa on 25/8/73, until late September when two or three were seen on the 19th, 20th and 22nd. Only one specimen of *P. cardui* L. was seen. This was in my garden from 5th to 11th August and what was obviously the same specimen was seen again in the Haligary gulley about half a mile to the east, on the 14th. *P. gamma* L. was first observed on 2nd June, ten pale specimens were recorded up to 21st August, 16 or 17 dark fresh ones between 29/8/73 and 16/9/73.

In 1974, *atalanta* appeared first on 8th June, and was decidedly commoner than in 1973, 30 specimens being observed between then and the end of September, as well as a con-

siderable number of larvae in late July and early August, some of which I reared. But again, I only noticed one specimen of *cardui*, near the shore at Coroghon Bay on 9th September. *Gamma* was not noticed until 22nd August, and only four specimens in all were observed, singly between then and 15th September. On 24/4/74 there was a specimen of *A. ypsilon* Rott. in the m.v. trap.

*P. aegeria* L. continues to turn up singly once or twice a year. The records for this period are 14th and 27th August 1972, in the Haligary gully; 21st August 1973, same place, and 25/8/73, in the wood near Tighard, probably the same specimen; 22/7/74, a worn specimen in my garden, seen again on 3rd August, a day when a fresh specimen was also seen sitting on the library window-sill. Searches were made in the woods in all three summers under consideration, but no other specimens were noticed.

*Z. purpuralis*. Not a single specimen was to be seen on the Tallabrig cliffs of Sanday, the main locality here, on 27/7/72, 6/7/73, or 17/7/73, and only one on 27/7/73; the weather has been bad during the emergence period of this moth for several years from 1970. But on 27/6/74 it was observed to be about on the cliffs again. In 1972 however it was seen several times in the Haligary gully between 21st July and 15th August in a spot where 12 mated pairs from Tallabrig had been released in 1968; but it was not noticed there again in 1973 or 1974.

*B. selene* L. was seen twice in 1972, on 13th June in the Haligary gully, and on 27th July on the Talabrig cliffs. It has not been noticed in 1973 or 1974; nor was *C. rubi* L., which was last observed at the foot of the Haligary gully on 11/6/72.

The moth trap produced 4,607 specimens in 1972, on 37 nights, 5,066 in 1973 on 55 nights, and only 2,458 in 1974 on 47 nights. The last reduced figure was partly due to a fuel-saving reduction in diesel running hours, but after April in 1974 there were very few good trapping nights, even the better spells of weather being windy and showery.

The only new species taken during these three years is *M. oxycanthae*, taken on 1/10/74. Other species of interest, besides the migrants already mentioned, were *C. potatoria*, three males taken on 17/7/73; I have only taken three specimens, all males, here previously, one each in 1949, 1963 and 1969, the first picked up dead on the road. *D. coryli* L., one on 5/5/72 and one on 18/5/72; only taken twice before, in 1961 and 1968. *C. furcula*, 17/6/74, only taken once before, in 1969. *A. aversata*, 20/7/72, only taken twice before, 1963, 1965. *A. fumata* Steph., 29/6/74, only once before (not in trap) in 1945. *E. prosapiaria* L. has turned up each of these three summers, and is probably established on the island by now.

The exceptionally fine April of 1974 produced 932 moths on 12 nights and would have produced more had I not had to leave the island on the 25th. This has only been approached

in my experience by the April of 1964 when 626 moths were taken on four nights in the second half of the month, including 259 on 18/4/64. In 1974 the largest number on a single night was 144 on the 9th, including two specimens of *D. vinula* 15 days earlier than the previous earliest (24/4/64).

*D. vinula* was not the only unusually early capture in the trap in April 1974. No fewer than 12 species which had never been captured in April before, were taken then, on an average about two weeks earlier than the earliest previous capture (the trap having been worked here since the summer of 1951). The unusually early species were:—

*M. rubi* L., 15/5/74, previous earliest 30/5/64, '68.

*S. menthastri* Esp., 18/4/74, previous earliest 5/5/53.

*A. menyanthidis* View., 22/4/74, previous earliest 17/5/52; first capture since 1968.

*N. plecta* L., 22/4/74, previous earliest 7/5/71.

*M. thalassina* Rott., 24/4/74, previous earliest 5/5/69, '71.

*M. glauca* Hübn., 22/4/74, previous earliest 5/5/69.

*M. dentina* Esp., 23/4/74, previous earliest 5/5/69, '71.

*D. conspersa* Esp., 16/4/74, previous earliest 2/5/55, '69.

*D. capsicola* Hübn., 7/5/74, previous earliest 12/5/57, '59.

*C. umbratica* L., 22/4/74, previous earliest 2/5/69.

*A. tripartita* Hufn., 23/4/74, previous earliest 6/5/69.

*C. designata* Rott., 22/4/74, previous earliest 3/5/57.

*S. bilunaria* Esp., 18/4/74, previous earliest 25/4/65.

*G. bidentata* Clerck, 23/4/74, previous earliest 8/5/53.

The butterflies also benefitted greatly from the exceptionally fine April of 1974. There were no April hail showers to destroy the newly hatched larvae of *V. urticae*, of which hundreds were later seen in various places, and the butterfly, which at one time was hardly to be seen on Canna, became commoner than at any time since 1947. *P. brassicae* was abundant; *A. aglaia* was seen several times around the buddleia in my garden, which has never happened before; *P. napi*, *C. pamphilus* and *P. icarus* were common in the usual places; *S. semele* and *M. jurtina* were more numerous than for a long time. At least the summer of 1974 produced a revival of the island's butterflies; but after so much wind and rain in the last few years, a summer like that of 1968 would be more than welcome.